

House Resolution 696

By: Representatives Brooks of the 63rd, Abdul-Salaam of the 74th, Frazier of the 123rd, Mitchell of the 88th, Williams of the 165th, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing and commending Civil Rights Movement pioneer Ms. Claudette Colvin; and
2 for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, Ms. Claudette Colvin's untold story of bravery as an advocate for social change
4 began on March 2, 1955; and

5 WHEREAS, as a 15 year-old student in Montgomery, Alabama, Ms. Colvin was inspired by
6 figures she had learned about during her school's Negro History Month when she refused to
7 vacate her seat on a bus to a white passenger; and

8 WHEREAS, as a result of her actions, Ms. Colvin was dragged off the bus by police,
9 arrested, and charged with violating segregation laws, disorderly conduct, and assault; and

10 WHEREAS, budding civil rights leaders from across the nation came to Alabama to meet
11 with police to help Ms. Colvin resolve the issue, including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; and

12 WHEREAS, the following year, Ms. Colvin and three other black females brought the
13 landmark lawsuit, *Browder v. Gayle*, which struck down the legal underpinnings for
14 segregated buses in the Jim Crow South and ended the bus boycott initiated by Rosa Parks
15 that kick-started the Civil Rights Movement; and

16 WHEREAS, Ms. Colvin's story and experiences have been recounted by Author Phillip
17 Hoose in his book, *Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice*, where she relates how the daily
18 humiliation of riding the bus to and from Booker T. Washington High School fueled her
19 refusal to heed the driver's order to hand over her seat; and

20 WHEREAS, less known for her actions than her Civil Rights Movement counterpart, Rosa
21 Parks, who refused to give up her seat on December 1, 1955, Ms. Colvin's story serves as a

22 reminder of the many important individuals that displayed quiet insistence on human dignity
23 in the face of segregation and racism; and

24 WHEREAS, Ms. Colvin currently lives in New York where she enjoys her retirement from
25 her work as a nursing home aide and is proud to know that her accomplishments and courage
26 led to a better future for her five grandchildren.

27 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
28 the members of this body join to honor Ms. Claudette Colvin and commend the extraordinary
29 sacrifices she made to protect and improve the quality of life of her fellow citizens and
30 ensure freedom and justice for all.

31 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
32 and directed to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to Ms. Claudette Colvin.